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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

INFORMATION 10430

OSD Review Completed

State Dept. review completed

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

22 May 1970

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *HK*  
SUBJECT: Secretary Rogers' Memo on Your Talk with Eban

Attached is Secretary Rogers' memo promised to you earlier.

He recommends, as did my earlier memo, that you seek to accomplish the following:

1. Reassure Israel sufficiently to keep the lid on in our bilateral relations and to damp down pressures in the meantime for an immediate aircraft decision.
2. Convey to Eban a picture of the hard political decisions we face and get the Israelis thinking about the possibility that they face some hard political decisions of their own if present dangerous trends in the Middle East are to be reversed.

He suggests telling Eban exactly where the aircraft decision stands bureaucratically: Your principal advisers have already had a number of meetings within the NSC framework. Tentatively, this process should be completed in the next 2-3 weeks.

He would stop short of offering more aircraft, using the following formula:

"We understand Israel's anxiety and its need to be certain about future sources of aircraft and other military supply. We are continuing the pipeline of general logistical support. Once the NSC review is completed, we plan to focus with Israel on the question of additional or replacement aircraft to which Secretary Rogers referred in his March 23rd statement. Israel can be assured that its source of aircraft will not be cut off."

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He suggests talking to Eban about the need for both the U. S. and Israel to re-appraise the assumptions underlying their strategies:

"The United States for its part, in addition to its commitment to Israel's survival, has a national responsibility to maintain a strong position in the Arab world. We see no way of reconciling these two aspects of US interests other than through a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This may not prove possible. The challenge now facing us is how Israel and the US can together work out a strategy which will reconcile our commitment to Israel's security with our need to avoid being progressively eliminated from the Arab world."

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE

WASHINGTON

S/S - 7501

SECRET/NODIS

May 21, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Israeli Foreign Minister Eban's Call  
on You Friday, May 22, 11:15 a.m.

Foreign Minister Eban is here for talks following an official visit to Canada and will call on you Friday morning. I expect that he will take much the same line with you as he did with me on Wednesday and as Prime Minister Meir did with Ambassador Barbour (summaries of those conversations are enclosed as Enclosures 2 and 3).

The main thrust of Eban's approach has been that the Soviets will continue to expand their military activities in support of the UAR and that this will constitute a growing threat to Israel's existence unless the United States takes firm action to get them to stop. In Israel's view, the United States should therefore immediately grant Israel's request for aircraft and in addition should make unequivocally clear to the Soviets that it stands behind Israel and will not tolerate any extension of the Soviet military involvement.

Together with Defense, CIA, and the NSC staff, we have been actively analyzing Israel's aircraft request in the light of recent Soviet moves and in the context of our overall political and strategic interests in the Middle East. This analysis includes an examination of the implications of a decision on the aircraft question for US-Soviet, US-Arab and US-Israeli relations and for the prospects of a peaceful settlement in the area. Concurrently and as part of this exercise, the re-evaluation of the military balance which you ordered is now virtually complete.

We plan to have ready for NSC consideration within the next two weeks a review of alternative strategies

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for dealing with the Middle East situation, including Israel's aircraft request, which will range from a) the kind of firm military response the Israelis are urging to b) new political initiatives by us directly with the parties designed to get the cease fire restored and a negotiating process started between them. If we go the latter route it will involve difficult efforts by us to get Israel to move toward political positions we have long advocated as necessary to generate progress toward a settlement. What we do for Israel on the aircraft question, and how we do it, will depend on what strategy we choose to follow. Meanwhile, I believe it is important to keep our political and military options open with Israel until we have completed the full NSC review.

In your meeting with Eban, we recommend that you seek to accomplish the following:

1. Reassure Israel sufficiently to keep the lid on in our bilateral relations and to damp down pressures in the meantime for an immediate aircraft decision.
2. Convey to Eban a picture of the hard political decisions we face and get the Israelis thinking about the possibility that they face some hard political decisions of their own if present dangerous trends in the Middle East are to be reversed.

Suggested talking points are attached at Enclosure 1 for your use with Eban.



William P. Rogers

Enclosures:

1. Suggested talking points.
2. Summary of my talk with Eban (State 77554 EXDIS).
3. Summary of Ambassador Barbour's talk with Mrs. Meir (Tel Aviv 2564 EXDIS).

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VISIT OF FOREIGN MINISTER EBAN

TALKING POINTS

- Despite the pressures of developments in Southeast Asia, we want the Israelis to know that their and our concerns about the Middle East are receiving active attention.
- We view recent Soviet moves in the area as extremely serious; they have created an entirely new dimension of problem. We have made clear to the Soviets and will continue to do so that they have embarked on a potentially dangerous commitment which we cannot ignore.
- We want the Israelis to know exactly where we stand in our review of this problem and of their aircraft request. Your principal advisers have already had a number of meetings within the NSC framework. Tentatively we anticipate that this review and decisions based upon it should be completed in the next two or three weeks, although we cannot give any hard and fast timetable.
- It is extremely important to keep the military situation from deteriorating in the meantime. To the extent that this is in Israel's hands, we urge continuation of the restraint they have shown vis-a-vis the Soviet presence, which we have noted and commend. We see no clear signs that the Soviets are assuming a more forward role in the UAR, although this aspect must obviously be watched.
- Our present review includes a re-evaluation of the military balance in light of the Soviet role and of current information on Arab force strengths. Israel may be assured that we will stand by our undertaking not to permit the balance to shift against it. We do not believe this has happened so far, but we are also looking at future trends. It must be recognized, however, that if the Soviets are to be an increasing

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and potentially open-ended factor in the military balance, the problem becomes much more complicated and dangerous than it would be in a purely Arab-Israeli context.

- We understand Israel's anxiety and its need to be certain about future sources of aircraft and other military supply. We are continuing the pipeline of general logistical support. Once the NSC review is completed, we plan to focus with Israel on the question of additional or replacement aircraft to which Secretary Rogers referred in his March 23rd statement. Israel can be assured that its source of aircraft will not be cut off.
- Given the new Soviet involvement and the challenge posed to our interests by President Nasser, we are looking at Israel's aircraft request in the context of the whole interrelated complex of Middle East questions. We face as critical a set of decisions on the Middle East as we have ever had to deal with, and we want to share with Israel some of the considerations which are on our minds.
- It seems to us that Israel and the United States are presently on a course whose prospects look bleak for both our interests. In the no-peace situation now existing, we have seen an escalation from the breakdown of the cease fire on Nasser's initiative, to the Israeli response of deep penetration raids against Egypt, to the Soviet response of sending in SAM-3's and pilots. Meanwhile the fedayeen, the Syrians, and other extremist elements are paralyzing the moderate governments in Lebanon and Jordan. Even King Faisal is increasingly hard pressed, which can inhibit his ability to play a constructive role with Iran in the Persian Gulf.
- In the circumstances, before going further down this road, both Israel and we need to reappraise the assumptions underlying our present strategies. As we see it, Israel and the United States have important overlapping interests, which include Israel's survival and keeping the Soviets from acquiring a stronger position in the area.

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- The United States for its part, in addition to its commitment to Israel's survival, has a national responsibility to maintain a strong position in the Arab world. We see no way of reconciling these two aspects of US interests other than through a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This may not prove possible in the end, since it depends not only on the United States and Israel but also upon the Arabs and, to a considerable but not absolute extent, on the USSR. The challenge now facing us is how Israel and the US can together work out a strategy which will reconcile our commitment to Israel's security, which has top priority for both of us, with our need to avoid being progressively eliminated from the Arab world, which is admittedly of greater importance to the US than it is to Israel.
- As we complete our current policy review, we urge that Israel give imaginative thought to possible political alternatives to the present dangerous military trend in the area.



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EXDIS

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER EBAN MAY 20

FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY ACCOUNT OF SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH EBAN  
MAY 20, BASED ON UNCLEARED MEMCON NOFORM AND FYI SUBJECT TO DETAILED  
REPORT BY SEPTEL.

1. EBAN, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR RABIN, MINISTER ARGOV, DIRECTOR  
NORTH AMERICAN DEPT ELIZUR AND COUNSELOR RAVIV, MET WITH  
SECRETARY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
ATHERTON AND COUNTRY DIRECTOR STACKHOUSE FOR 90 MINUTES AFTERNOON  
MAY 20. MEETING WAS DEVOTED MAINLY TO NEW SOVIET INVOLVEMENT  
IN EGYPT, ISRAELI HOPES FOR HELP FROM US AND OUR DESIRE FOR  
MORE FLEXIBILITY IN ISRAELI POSITION. EBAN SAID HIS FRAME OF  
REFERENCE WAS RECENT STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY  
REAFFIRMING US FRIENDSHIP FOR ISRAEL AND US INTENTION NOT TO





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ALLOW THE ARMS BALANCE TO BE UPSET. EBAN ARGUED AN EARLY AMERICAN RESPONSE TO SOVIET MOVES WAS ESSENTIAL IF SOVIETS WERE TO BE CHECKED AND PRESSED FOR BOTH AN EARLY POSITIVE REPLY TO ISRAEL AIRCRAFT REQUESTS AND SOME PUBLIC US STATEMENT THAT WOULD DELINEATE LIMITS OF SOVIET ACTIVITY IN MIDDLE EAST TOLERABLE TO THE US. ISRAEL, EBAN SAID, WAS RESOLVED TO DEFEND ITS POSITIONS ON THE CEASEFIRE LINE WHILE EXERCISING RESTRAINT BY DOING NOTHING TO PROVOKE COMATE WITH THE SOVIETS. EBAN SAID HIS MISSION HERE WAS EXPLORATORY TO DETERMINE WHETHER US EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION WAS NEARING ITS CONCLUSION.

2. SECRETARY TOLD EBAN US STOOD FIRMLY BY ITS STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT AND THAT EXAMINATION OF THE SITUATION WAS PROCEEDING URGENTLY, THOUGH NO DECISION HAD BEEN REACHED AS YET. SECRETARY POINTED OUT MANY US MIDDLE EAST INTERESTS THAT WOULD BE AFFECTED BY THIS DECISION WHILE AGREEING US MUST MAKE CLEAR TO THE SOVIETS ITS RESOLVE. SECRETARY ASKED WHETHER ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WAS CONSIDERING WHAT IT MIGHT DO TO BRING PEACE NEARER. EBAN TRACED PAST ISRAELI EFFORTS, ASSERTED NASSER AND ARABS NOT INTERESTED IN PEACE AND SAID IN EFFECT THAT ISRAEL IS SO ANXIOUS ABOUT PRESENT IT CANNOT FOCUS ON THE LONGER TERM. EBAN REVEALED NO SIGNS OF GIVE HOWEVER ON ISRAELI POLITICAL POSTURE TOWARD A SETTLEMENT OR ITS CONTINUING OPPOSITION TO OUR POSITION AND EFFORTS IN THE MAJOR POWER TALKS. SECRETARY URGED THAT ISRAEL IN PRESENTING TO THE WORLD ITS DESIRE FOR PEACE STRESS MORE THE FUTURE RATHER THAN RECRIMINATIONS ABOUT THE PAST. IN CLOSING, SECRETARY URGED THAT EBAN NOT READ IN US INABILITY TO GIVE HIM AN ANSWER NOW ANY CHANGE IN US FREQUENTLY STATED POSITIONS REGARDING ISRAEL.

GP3.

ROGERS



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SUBJECT: MRS. MEIR ON AIRCRAFT FOR ISRAEL AND SOVIET PRESENCE IN UAR

1. PRIME MINISTER MEIR SUMMONED AMBASSADOR AT 4:00 PM LOCAL MAY 19. SAID GOI DISAPPOINTED THAT NO ACTION TAKEN YET BY USG IN LIGHT OF APPEARANCE OF SOVIET PILOTS ON OPERATIONAL MISSIONS IN UAR. STATEMENTS MADE AT END OF APRIL BY US OFFICIALS HAD BEEN FINE, BUT GOI HAD EXPECTED THEY WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY ACTION. IN MEANTIME SOVIETS AND EGYPTIANS HAD BECOME EMBOLDENED BY LACK OF US ACTION. VIOLENCE IN CANAL AREA HAD INCREASED AND ATTEMPT WAS BEING MADE TO CONSTRUCT ANTIAIRCRAFT SITES (WHETHER FOR SA-2'S, SA-3'S OR ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS) IN CANAL VICINITY, WHICH ISRAEL WAS INTERDICTING BY BOMBING. SHE STRONGLY HOPED FOR AFFIRMATIVE ANSWER ON ISRAEL'S REQUEST

FOR AIRCRAFT AND FOR STATEMENT BY US TO USSR INDICATING LIMITS OF US OPERATION. IN ADDITION, WHILE GRATEFUL FOR STEPS SO FAR TO EASE ISRAEL'S ECONOMIC SITUATION THIS YEAR, PROBLEM OF LONG-RANGE ECONOMIC AID WAS REACHING CRITICAL STAGE.

2. AMBASSADOR NOTED US REAPPRAISAL OF SITUATION BEING MADE ON URGENT BASIS BUT NOT YET COMPLETED. UNDERSTOOD NEW CONSTRUCTION WAS 20 TO 25 MILES FROM CANAL IN EGYPT, AND NOT YET KNOWN WHETHER THIS WAS PART OF MEASURES TAKEN TO DEFEND POPULATED CENTERS IN EGYPT. MORE IMPORTANT

QUESTION OF SOVIET INTENTIONS ALSO STILL UNKNOWN. UAR HAD STEPPED UP VIOLENCE ON CANAL, BUT ISRAEL HAD BEEN ABLE TO COPE WITH IT. MOREOVER, THERE HAD BEEN CERTAIN ESCALATION ON ISRAELI SIDE AS WELL, AND NO SIGN OF EFFORTS TO COOL SITUATION. HE APPRECIATED IMPORTANCE TO ISRAEL OF PROBLEMS MRS. MEIR HAD OUTLINED, BUT CAUTIONED AGAINST OVERDRAWING IMMEDIATE DANGERS.

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3. MRS. MEIR COUNTERED THAT SHE WAS NOT EXAGGERATING BUT UNDERSTATING

CASE. ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE WAS IN BALANCE. SHE HAD BEEN DUE TO MAKE SPEECH YESTERDAY ON RESUMPTION OF KNESSET SESSION BUT HAD POSTPONED FOR A WEEK BECAUSE SHE DID NOT WANT TO OUTLINE FOR ISRAELIS THE DANGERS THEY MUST FACE WITHOUT BEING ABLE AT SAME TIME TO SAY SOMETHING POSITIVE ABOUT ATTITUDE OF US. EGYPT AND SOVIET UNION MUST BE TAUGHT A LESSON. CERTAINLY USG DOES NOT WANT TO SEE SOVIETS BECOME OVERLORDS OF MIDDLE EAST, THEN NORTH AFRICA AND FINALLY SOUTHERN EUROPE AS WELL. PRESIDENT NIXON HAD SAID THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT STAND ALONE, BUT WHEN WAS THE TEST TO BE? SHE HAD FEELING THAT ISRAEL WAS NOW AT CRITICAL POINT. AMBASSADOR SAID HE COULD NOT STATE WHEN DECISIONS WOULD BE MADE BY USG BUT ASSURED MRS. MEIR THAT FULL CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN HER VIEWS, WHICH HE WOULD TRANSMIT FORTHWITH TO WASHINGTON.

4. COMMENT: MRS. MEIR WAS CLEARLY SETTING STAGE FOR EBAN'S MEETING IN WASHINGTON TOMORROW. SHE APPEARED DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT PASSAGE OF TIME WAS CAUSING SOVIETS TO ESTIMATE THAT THEY HAD GOTTEN AWAY WITH WHAT HAD ALREADY BEEN DONE AND THAT THEY COULD SAFELY MOVE AHEAD WITH WHAT SHE CONSIDERS PLANS TO TRY TO SHOVE ISRAEL BACK FROM CANAL. SHE ACCEPTED AMBASSADOR'S CAUTIONS IN GOOD SPIRIT BUT DID NOT SEEM TO SOFTEN HER SENSE OF URGENCY.

5. FULL REPORT OF CONVERSATION FOLLOWS. GP-3  
BARBOUR